



## INDICATOR: PROTECTED AREAS AND CONSERVATION LANDS

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** Enhance Resilience

**TARGET:** 13. By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial and aquatic systems are conserved through well-connected networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

**THEME:** Conservation and Sustainable Use – Protected Areas and Conservation Lands

### **Background Information:**

Protected areas and conservation lands include a wide variety of lands that are managed for conservation. They are fundamental building blocks in virtually all regional, national and international biodiversity conservation strategies. A comprehensive and effectively managed system of protected areas and conservation lands is a critical element for the conservation of biodiversity and a cornerstone of healthy, functioning ecosystems. In 2010, a global target was established to conserve 17% of the Earth's terrestrial and inland water areas by 2020 through well-managed, representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (CBD 2010). This target was adopted in the 2011 update of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy (OBC 2011). The Far North Act, 2010 also includes an objective to protect at least 225,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the Far North in an interconnected network of protected areas designated in community based land use plans. This represents about 50% of the Far North of Ontario.

Regulated protected areas include provincial and national parks, conservation reserves and wilderness areas. In the Far North of Ontario, Dedicated Protected Areas (DPAs) are established through community based land use plans which are jointly developed and approved by First Nations and Ontario, and determine which lands are to be set aside for protection and which are suitable for sustainable economic development. Other types of conservation lands include conservation areas and lands and conservation easements secured through conservation organizations. These conservation lands play a particularly important role in landscapes dominated by private lands such as southern Ontario.

This indicator assesses trends in the percentage of regulated protected areas, DPAs in the Far North and conservation lands within Ontario by ecozone.

### **Data Analysis:**

Data on the area and location of regulated protected areas were downloaded from the Conservation Areas Reporting and Tracking System (CARTS). Data on Far North DPAs is contained in (as of December, 2014) four approved community based land use plans (OMNRF 2014). Information on conservation lands and conservation easements was obtained from various conservation organizations (Conservation Ontario, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Nature Conservancy Canada, Ontario Heritage Trust and Ontario Land Trust Alliance). Lands and easements held by these organizations (excluding cultural and built-up areas) were considered to qualify as other effective area-based conservation measures for the purpose of this indicator. The Canadian Council on Ecological Areas is currently developing guidance to identify eligible conservation lands (CCEA 2013). Lands for which there are term-limited conservation agreements that



were included in this indicator in 2010 have not been included in this update consistent with interim guidance from the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA 2013).

The percentage of protected areas, DPAs and conservation lands was calculated for each ecozone (three terrestrial ecozones plus the waters of the Great Lakes Ecozone) and compared to 2010 values (Figure 1). Spatial data were also used to map the proportion of each terrestrial ecodistrict that consists of regulated protected areas and DPAs (Figure 2). Comprehensive spatial data are currently not available for conservation lands.

- [download CARTS data](#)

## Results:

**Trend:** Improvement    **Data Confidence:** Medium    **Geographic Extent:** Provincial

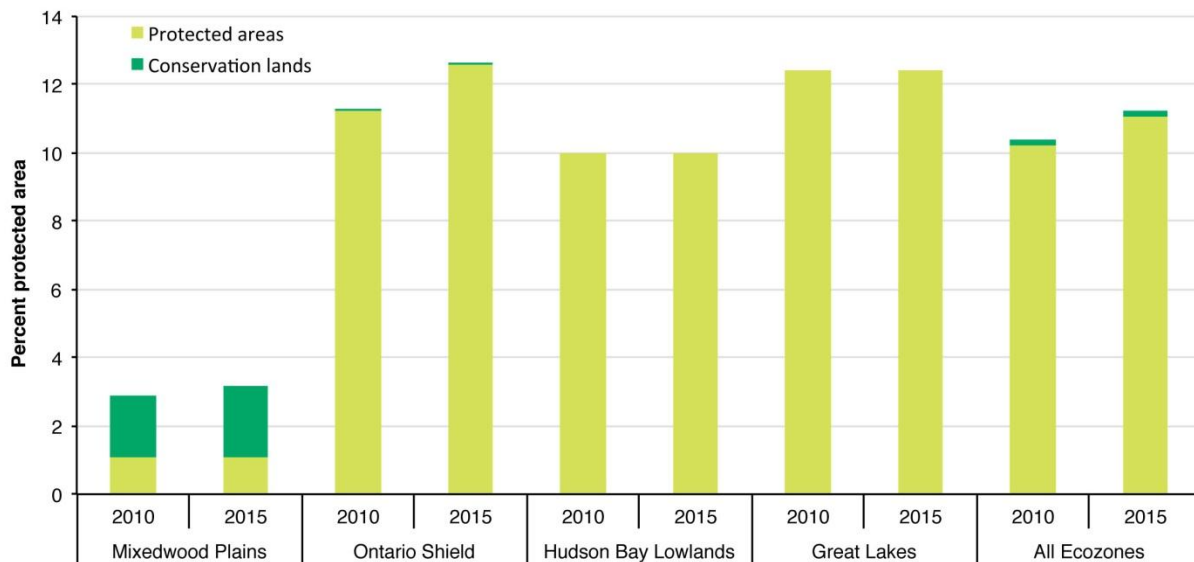


Figure 1. Percentage of Ontario's ecozones that consist of protected areas (including Dedicated Protected Areas in the Far North) and conservation lands.

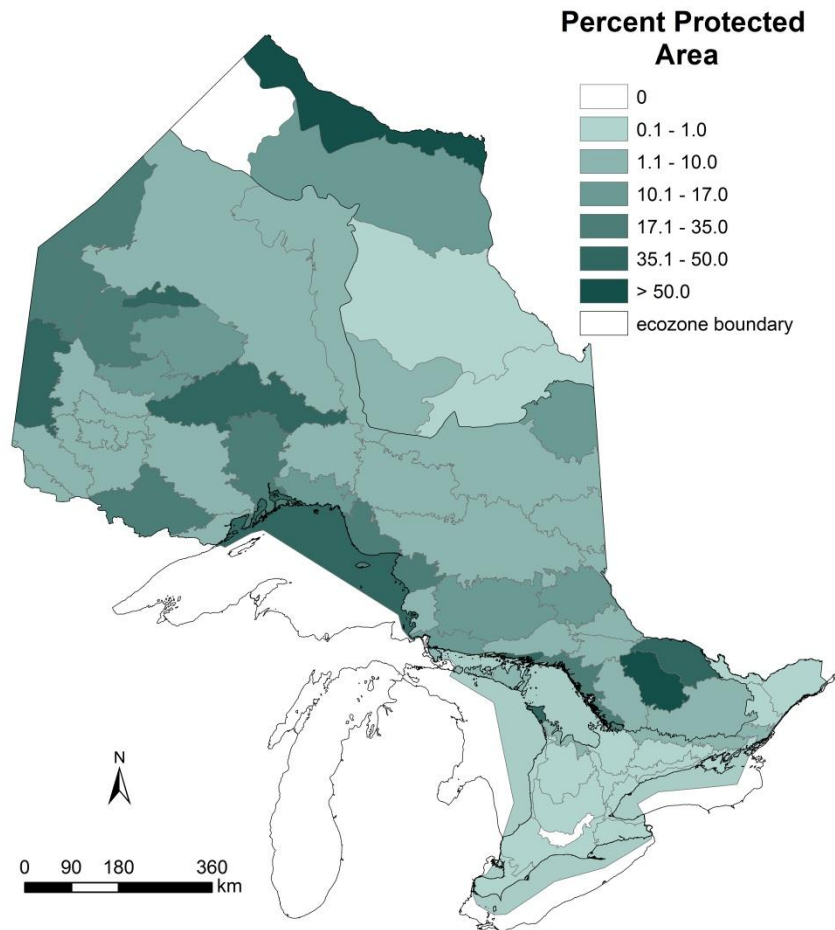


Figure 2. Percentage of each ecodistrict that consists of protected areas (including Dedicated Protected Areas in the Far North).

**Status:**

- 11.1% of Ontario is protected within provincial and national parks, Dedicated Protected Areas (DPAs) in the Far North, conservation reserves and wilderness areas. A further 0.2% is protected by conservation lands.
- The proportion of ecozone area in protected areas and conservation lands is highest in the Ontario Shield Ecozone (12.6%), followed by the Great Lakes Ecozone (12.4%), Hudson Bay Lowlands Ecozone (10.0%), and the Mixedwood Plains Ecozone (3.1%). The Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area accounts for 99% of the protected area in the Great Lakes Ecozone.
- Since 2010, there has been an increase in protected areas in the Ontario Shield Ecozone, largely associated with the establishment of DPAs in the Far North. There has also been an increase in the area of conservation lands in the Mixedwood Plains Ecozone.
- While the proportion of the province conserved in protected areas and conservation lands has increased from 10.4% to 11.2% since 2010, it is still well short of the 17% target.



## **Links:**

**Related Targets:** N/A

**Related Themes:** N/A

## **Web Links:**

Ontario Parks <http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/provincial-parks-and-conservation-reserves-planning>

Ontario Far North Land Use Planning Initiative <http://www.ontario.ca/rural-and-north/far-north-land-use-planning-initiative>

Parks Canada [http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/np-pn/pr-sp/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/np-pn/pr-sp/index_e.asp)

Conservation Ontario <http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca/>

Ducks Unlimited Canada <http://www.ducks.ca/>

Nature Conservancy Canada <http://www.natureconservancy.ca/>

Ontario Heritage Trust <http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/>

Ontario Land Trust Alliance <http://olta.ca/>

## **References:**

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). 2010. The strategic plan for biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi biodiversity targets. [Available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/COP-10/cop-10-dec-02-en.pdf>]

Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA). 2013. Interpreting Aichi biodiversity target 11 in the Canadian context: towards consensus on “other effective area-based conservation measures”, October 2013. Canadian Council on Ecological Areas, Ottawa, ON. [Available at: <http://www.ccea.org/aichi-target-11-workshop-report/>]

Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA). 2014. Conservation Areas Reporting and Tracking System (CARTS). [Available at: <http://www.ccea.org/tools-resources/carts/>, accessed on August 25, 2014]

Ontario Biodiversity Council (OBC). 2011. Ontario’s biodiversity strategy, 2011: renewing our commitment to protection what sustains us. Ontario Biodiversity Council, Peterborough, ON.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF). 2014. Dedicated Protected Areas in the Far North of Ontario. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Peterborough, ON.

## **Citation**

Ontario Biodiversity Council. 2015. State of Ontario's Biodiversity [web application]. Ontario Biodiversity Council, Peterborough, Ontario. [Available at: <http://ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/sobr> (Date Accessed: May 19, 2015)].